

of the several parts, can never be sufficiently appreciated: too much study cannot be given to these stupendous ruins.

The artist will be amply compensated for all his time bestowed on them, but it is the plan only that I am speaking of, for these buildings were chiefly constructed in the decline of art, when the ancient purity of decoration was scarcely felt: and although the munificence and example of Dioclesian revived the love and taste for architecture, and by forming artists capable of imitating with success the style and manner of a purer age, he thereby rendered it superior, under his immediate successors, to what it had been in his own time.—yet the decline of the art, and its struggles to preserve existence, are but too often visible in their works. The degradation of architecture now became most rapid, and in proportion as the other arts declined, they drew architecture along with them: and although many of the public buildings erected by the emperors, after the immediate successors of Dioclesian, were large and expensive, yet in general they had little more to recommend them."

The lecturer had then left this part of his subject, and proceeded to treat of obelisks and pyramids: the following, said Mr. Tite, are his own words:—

*Obelisks and Pyramids.*—Among the essential decorations of architecture, obelisks and pyramids have strong claims to the attention of the artist. Obelisks, which owe their origin to the Egyptians, were frequently of enormous dimensions; sometimes triangular, sometimes conical, but in general square at their bases, and gradually diminishing.

Obelisks, entering into the religious opinions of the Egyptians, were probably first used in the worship of the sun, to whom they were consecrated. According to Diodorus Siculus, Sesostris caused two immense obelisks to be raised in the city of Heliopolis, to decorate the entrance to the Temple of the Sun: they were similarly applied in the fronts of the great temples and palaces of the Egyptians. They were likewise used as historical monuments; but it does not appear that they were ever used by the Egyptians, as has been imagined, to embellish their sepulchral monuments, to which purpose, however, they were applied by the Romans afterwards.

Two obelisks of red granite, formerly in Heliopolis, were conveyed to Rome, and set up before the entrance into the Mausoleum of Augustus in the Campus Martius, one of which is now to be seen in the front of the church of Sta. Maria Maggiore, and the other at Monte Cavallo. In modern art, obelisks are frequently placed indiscriminately as decorations to various descriptions of buildings and other purposes. This would not be done if the text of Vitruvius was attended to, who tells us that the architect should be learned in history, well informed of the primitive destination and origin of things, and on all occasions able to trace every invention to its first principles and original cause.

We have already seen the column at different times twisted, rusticated, and tortured in different ways; nor has the obelisk, beautiful when seen in its simple form and placed in its proper situation, been treated with more attention; for at different periods and in different countries obelisks have had their cinctures and rusticated bandages, and have often been placed on various substructions.

Pliny speaks of an obelisk elevated on balls,—at Constantinople there is such an example, but we have no instance in antiquity of an obelisk placed on an upright pedestal, nor any reason to suppose that manner existed, except from a representation on a medal of unknown date, and by presuming that the pedestal near the fallen obelisk in the Campus Martius at Rome, was prepared and used in Egypt with the obelisk itself; but this last circumstance is by no means ascertained. The moderns have, however, taken uncommon latitude, and placed obelisks not only on pedestals of various descriptions in form and relative dimensions, but likewise on the summits of pyramids, and sometimes on the backs of animals; but notwithstanding the sanction of these examples, an obelisk injudiciously raised on an upright pedestal is contrary to the great principles of the architecture of the

Egyptians, who placed their obelisks on the ground, or raised upon one or more steps or square plinths: this is consistent with the rest of their architecture, which is constantly declining from the upright; their apertures of every kind were diminished in like manner, and the walls of their buildings were likewise sloping, in order to give the greatest possible idea of duration.

The fountain in the Piazza Navona is the work of a bold and daring mind:—it is impossible not to be astonished and in some measure pleased with this mighty flight of genius. The placing an immense obelisk on an artificial rock, perforated with four large openings, was worthy of an artist—it produces that sort of mixed emotion in the mind, of pleasure and pain, not unlike the magical effect produced by viewing the spire of St. Dunstan's in the East, the justly celebrated piece of mechanism of Sir Christopher Wren.

Mr. Tite agreed with Soane in thinking a pedestal for an obelisk erroneous; the Egyptians placed them on two or three steps, and this was the right arrangement. The adoption of a pedestal for the Luxor obelisk in Paris was to be regretted. The mis-use made by moderns of pyramids was alluded to,—the gateway in Cobham Park by Wyatt, which is surmounted by a pyramid, and the entrance gate at Holkham by Kent, were instanced.

The fourth lecture traced the progress of architecture from the time of Constantine to that of the perfect development of pointed architecture. Soane was not fond of Gothic, and failed when he endeavoured to design in this style; the following portion of the lecture, however, shews that he could appreciate its beauties:—

"The word 'Gothic,' when applied to architecture, is used to distinguish the style that succeeded, and was, in fact, little more than a clumsy imitation of the different structures erected by the Romans in those countries which they had conquered; hence, after the entire subversion of the Roman empire, this style or manner of building became general throughout Europe. Thus, we find the early Saxon buildings were little more than rude copies of Roman works: and when the power of the Saxons gave way to the proud and expensive Normans, no material progress or improvement having been made in architecture, they retained in their buildings the Saxon manner in most of its essentials. The circular arch, round-headed windows and doors; massive pillars, with a kind of regular base and capital, the shafts sometimes plain, sometimes encumbered with small semi-columns, and at other times adorned with spiral grooves winding round, and net or lozenge work overspreading them; these, with the thick walls, small apertures, and other features of the early Saxon manner, were generally used until the twelfth century.

The great characteristic differences between the Saxon and Norman architecture may be traced in the quantity of ornaments, and in the increased magnitude of the buildings, particularly the churches: the latter were often so large, that their founders seldom did more than lay the foundation of the entire edifice and finish the east end, leaving the rest of the structure to be completed by their successors.

Hence arose those discordant mixtures of different styles and ages, in most of the Norman buildings.

The prodigious clumsiness of composition and gloominess of effect, so strongly marked in the Saxon and Norman edifice, cannot be attributed to a deficiency of mathematical or mechanical knowledge in the builders of those ages; there must have been other motives—probably very remote ones.

When Christianity first appeared, its votaries were compelled to perform their devotions secretly, in dark, subterranean places—in the most retired and gloomy recesses. From these circumstances it may be concluded, when free permission was allowed to the public exercise of the sacred functions of Christianity, that even then, the primitive Christians, led by religious veneration, and respect for early

habits, endeavoured to preserve, in their buildings above ground, much of the heaviness, gloom, and intricacy of the subterranean sepulchres and concealed places wherein they at first had sheltered themselves, and exercised the rites and ceremonies of their religion.

It has been already observed, that the temples erected by the Hindûs and Egyptians to their divinities, and the dwellings for their families, were imitations of their former caverns and sombre retreats in the rocks and mountains. When the Greeks constructed buildings with stone and marble, they adhered as nearly as possible to a faithful imitation of their early works in timber. Now, if we suppose that our ancestors felt in the same manner, and admit that the style in which many of the early Christian churches were built originated in such feelings, too much praise cannot be given to the artists of those days for this kind of imitation: everything they aimed at was completely obtained; and if, in the blind bigotry of the dark ages, fear and terror were to be excited, and gloom and melancholy were mistaken for zeal and devotion, it did not lessen the merit of the builders of these sacred edifices, so admirably calculated to impress the beholder with awe and respect.

Subsequently, a style of building, totally different from that of the Saxons and Normans, became general, not only in this country, but throughout Europe. The windows, heretofore narrow and low, were then made wide and high, divided into various parts, and different ramifications; the solids were then as small as formerly they had been excessive; the round arch became pointed; the arch springing from an impost, or from the capital of a low pillar, entirely disappeared, and the large truncated shaft itself was now formed by a cluster of small columns, or divided into various parts by mouldings placed vertically on the pavement, and from thence continued uninterruptedly into the vaulted roof of the nave.

By these combinations a new and singular system of building was introduced, differing in its essentials from any other then known to exist, and producing, as it were, an entire revolution in architecture.

Some have attributed this invention to an imitation of an early custom of most nations of worshipping the Deity in sacred groves, and that, when constructed buildings were substituted for that purpose, pious men, of deep reflection and superior science, warned by the contemplation and awful effects produced by the varied play of light and the deep tones of the shadows in groves of trees, were tempted to imitate those scenes of nature in buildings of stone. If such were their object, it must be admitted that they were as successful in this system as in the former.

To whatever causes the origin of this novel and imposing system is attributable, all agree that long avenues of trees of different growths, disposed in parallel lines and intersected by others at right angles, the branches meeting, and as it were crossing each other, always remind us of the nave, side aisles, transept, and other parts of a Gothic cathedral.

After all that has been written on this subject, it is very doubtful whether this new system of building originated with us, or was introduced into this country from the continent, where the minds of men seem to have been more directed to the improvement of architecture and scientific construction; and where a society was actually formed for these purposes, long before this new system of building was known in England.

This band of associated brothers kept to themselves all the laws and regulations of their proceedings; the members, divided into bodies or classes, travelled throughout Europe, building churches, monasteries, and other edifices. To keep their science to themselves, they dwelt in huts near the buildings on which they were engaged, and for the same reason they conversed with each other chiefly by signs, understood only by themselves: hence mankind, not having free access to the real source from whence this society derived their knowledge, know so little with certainty of the origin of this peculiar style of building.

This new manner of building was characterised in subsequent works by a lightness of